

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

Amend the bill in section 1 in subsection 1 in the 5th line (page 1, line 16 in L.D.) by striking out the following: "operating the commission" and inserting the following: 'the Public Utilities Commission Regulatory Fund established pursuant to this section. The budget for the Public Utilities Commission Regulatory Fund is subject to legislative review and approval in accordance with subsection 2'

Amend the bill by inserting after section 1 the following:

'**Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §116, sub-§2,** as amended by PL 1997, c. 424, Pt. B, §4, is further amended to read:

2. Committee recommendations; legislative approval of budget. The commission shall submit its budget recommendations as part of the unified current services budget legislation in accordance with Title 5, sections 1663 to 1666. The commission shall make a presentation of its budget recommendations contained in any current services budget legislation and any supplemental budget legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over public utilities matters. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over public utilities matters shall review the commission's recommendations and make recommendations to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over appropriations and financial affairs regarding the budget of the commission, including but not limited to all expenditures from the fund established pursuant to this section. The commission shall make an annual report in accordance with section 120 of its planned expenditures for the year and on its use of funds in the previous year. TheIn addition to the assessments authorized under this section, the commission may also receive other funds as appropriated or allocated by the Legislature.'

SUMMARY

This amendment clarifies the role of the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over public utilities matters with respect to review and oversight of the Public Utilities Commission, PUC, budget and the Public Utilities Commission Regulatory Fund in particular. It amends the provision of law governing the legislative approval of the PUC budget to specify that the PUC shall present its budget to the joint standing committee and the committee shall make recommendations on the entire budget, including the Public Utilities Commission Regulatory Fund. The amendment also clarifies the language in the bill regarding the maximum total assessment to specify that legislative allocations for the Public Utilities Commission Regulatory Fund govern the total assessment amount. Finally, it also clarifies that the Legislature may allocate, not only appropriate, additional funds for the commission.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)